



Interview Summary: Graham Wight, Government of Ontario

Background

Mr. Graham Wight is a Police Services Advisor (**Advisor**) with the Police Services Liaison Unit (the **Unit**) within the Inspectorate of Policing (the **Inspectorate**) at the Ministry of the Solicitor General (**SOLGEN**) of Ontario. The Unit includes a team of five to six Advisors. They are responsible for liaising with and providing advice to municipal police services boards.

Starting in the Summer or Fall of 2021, Mr. Wight was acting as the Unit's Manager. During this time, Lindsey Gray was the Advisor responsible for the zone including the Ottawa Police Services Board (**OPSB** or **Board**). She reported to Mr. Wight at this time. As Manager, Mr. Wight would in turn report to Kenneth Weatherill, then-Deputy Inspector General of Policing for Ontario.

In December 2021, Mr. Wight returned to his Police Service Advisor role and Ms. Lynne Haves took over responsibilities as the Unit's Manager. As Ms. Gray was transitioning to a new position outside of the Ontario Public Service, Mr. Wight assumed responsibility for the zone including the OPSB on February 14, 2022. He continues to work in this role and to advise the OPSB.

Mr. Wight was interviewed by Natalia Rodriguez and Jean-Simon Schoenholz on November 17, 2022. Questions about this summary should be directed to Jean-Simon Schoenholz.

The Role of the Police Services Advisor

Mr. Wight explained that an Advisor's role stems from the *Police Services Act* (**PSA**). In particular, he indicated that Advisors assist the Solicitor General in discharging their duties under paragraphs 3(2)(b) and (g) of the PSA.

Mr. Wight explained that an Advisor typically provides high level guidance on the PSA, its regulations, and relevant standards. This advice is typically developed and approved by SOLGEN before being transmitted back to the board. An Advisor could at times provide advice to a board on the risks of making one decision instead of another, but an Advisor's role does not extend to directing or recommending a particular course of action to the board. In extreme circumstances, such as instances of immediate or acute non-compliance with the PSA, an Advisor could intervene to advise a board to consider or explore other options to bring itself into compliance with the PSA. Boards are not bound by the advice provided by the Advisor.

Mr. Wight noted that the Board has various additional resources at its disposal to advise it on legal issues, policy matters, and decision-points arising in the execution of its mandate, including its own legal counsel and staff, and City legal counsel, among others,



and it is not unusual for an Advisor not to be asked to provide input on every issue arising within the Board's mandate.

SOLGEN has not taken a position on or endorsed the Morden report (**Morden**).¹ Advisors do, however, suggest to boards that they review the recommendations in Morden as this can be a useful resource. Mr. Wight noted that boards often integrate the principles from Morden into their own policies and that, when Morden was issued, boards and chiefs of police were provided with an All-Chiefs Memorandum encouraging them to carefully consider the findings in Morden and determine how best to address the recommendations.

Advising the Ottawa Police Services Board

Mr. Wight had previously worked with the OPSB in 2020. At the time, Sandy Smallwood was Chair of the Board. He worked briefly with Councillor Deans when she returned as Chair in 2021 before Mr. Wight began a secondment as the Manager of the Police Services Liaison Unit in June of 2021.

In January and February 2022, Mr. Wight had no formal role with respect to the OPSB until February 14, 2022, when he replaced Ms. Gray as Advisor to the OPSB. A few weeks before he took over from Ms. Gray, he began transitioning into this new role and was occasionally copied on some emails pertaining to the OPSB. Further information related to the OPSB and the events unfolding in early February 2022 was shared between Ms. Gray, Ms. Haves (the manager) and Mr. Wight. Mr. Wight was aware that the Board had made a specific request to Ms. Gray, notably with respect to advice on communications with the Chief of the Ottawa Police Service (**OPS**).² He was aware that Ms. Gray had provided certain information to the Board in response to these inquiries.³ This informed his approach with the Board.

In Mr. Wight's opinion, the type of questions asked by the Board to Ms. Gray raised doubts in his mind about the Board's awareness of its own policies. That said, Mr. Wight explained that an Advisor's role is not to direct the Board in making decisions about how to apply its own policies, although an Advisor may certainly make the Board aware that a Board policy may be relevant to its decision-making. An Advisor may also provide guidance on the PSA and its regulations and may identify other potential sources of guidance (such as Morden).

¹ COM00000616.

² See ONT00001111, ONT00001112 and ONT00001120.

³ ONT00001118.



Mr. Wight first attended a meeting of the OPSB on February 15, 2022.⁴ The Board meeting began with the announcement of Chief Sloly's resignation. Chair Deans asked for the Board to provide her with the delegated authority to hire an external interim Chief of Police. Chair Deans did not feel it was appropriate to hire a replacement internally. Mr. Wight reported this information to Ms. Haves and Mr. Weatherill immediately.

Mr. Wight was not aware of any concerns (internal or external to SOLGEN) with respect to the potential hiring of an external interim Chief of Police and none were communicated to him. Similarly, Mr. Wight was not aware of any attempts (internal or external to SOLGEN) to have Steve Bell appointed as interim Chief. Neither Ms. Haves nor Mr. Weatherill sought information from Mr. Wight as to which candidates the Board was considering.

A singular concern was top of mind for SOLGEN – potential immediate and acute non-compliance with the PSA by the Board. The Board Chair had accepted Chief Sloly's resignation without any realistic plan to hire an interim Chief by the end of the day. Mr. Wight raised with the Board that failing to have a Chief in place would put them in non-compliance with the PSA. He reported this potential immediate and acute non-compliance to Ms. Haves and Mr. Weatherill.

It is Mr. Wight's understanding that hiring a Chief of Police lies within the exclusive authority of a municipal police services board in accordance with the PSA. Boards often set processes for the recruitment and appointment of Chiefs of Police that include consultation with stakeholders and other activities, but his understanding is that these steps are not specifically required by the PSA. A resolution appointing the Chief of Police by the Board fulfils the Board's statutory obligations under section 31(d) of the PSA to appoint a chief of police.

It was Mr. Wight's understanding of the February 15, 2022 meeting that the Board purported to delegate authority to Chair Deans to sign a contract with an interim Chief. That said, Mr. Wight noted that it was unclear to him whether all Board members understood what they had agreed to. He also noted that this confusion led to Chair Deans undertaking different steps to appoint a Chief of Police than was potentially understood by the Board's own Human Resources Committee.

Asked about the removal of Chair Deans from the Board by Ottawa City Council on February 16, 2022, Mr. Wight explained that it was Council's prerogative under the PSA to appoint members to the Board. This is consistent with clause 27(9)(b) of the PSA which states that council shall appoint to the board two members of the council by resolution of the council. The reasons for which a board member is appointed or removed by council is outside of SOLGEN's mandate.

⁴ ONT00001117. See also ONT00001121.



Confidentiality Concerns

Mr. Wight confirmed that he had heard of confidentiality concerns with respect to the OPSB. The Board's Executive Director had told him in passing that the Board was known as a "leaky organization". He also recalls that Chair Deans mentioned to him at one point that she didn't feel comfortable providing the Board with all the information she received from the OPS as she believed the information would not be kept within the Board.

Mr. Wight was not made aware of the source of these alleged confidentiality breaches. He was not asked for advice on this issue. Had he been, he would have referred Chair Deans or the Board to the Members of Police Services Board – Code of Conduct regulation under the PSA.

Closing Thoughts

Asked what changes could be made going forward, Ms. Wight referred to the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA)*, which has been passed by the Ontario legislature but is not yet in force.⁵ When proclaimed in force it will replace the PSA.

The CSPA will require that board members must complete mandatory training on a range of issues as set out in the CSPA and regulations. The CSPA will provide the Inspector General of Policing the authority to inspect and investigate for compliance on this requirement.

⁵ COM00000942.